

Bottleneck's days are numbered

New Del. 1 Odessa bypass set to open in September

By **ROBERT LONG**
and **CHIP GUY**
Staff reporters

For four summers now, beachgoers have waited in their cars on U.S. 13 to squeeze through Odessa — within sight of highway construction that promised eventual relief.

In just a few weeks, the wait will be over as the worst traffic bottleneck to the beach disappears. Starting as soon as Sept. 13, motorists can set their cruise controls to 55 mph as they travel on the new Del. 1 Odessa bypass, whizzing by those nasty traffic snarls.

It's one of the few remaining pieces in a 20-year plan to link northern Delaware to its seashore with a high-speed modern highway.

Southbound motorists will have the first crack at the limited-access road when portions open in mid-September. One month later, the northbound lanes will open.

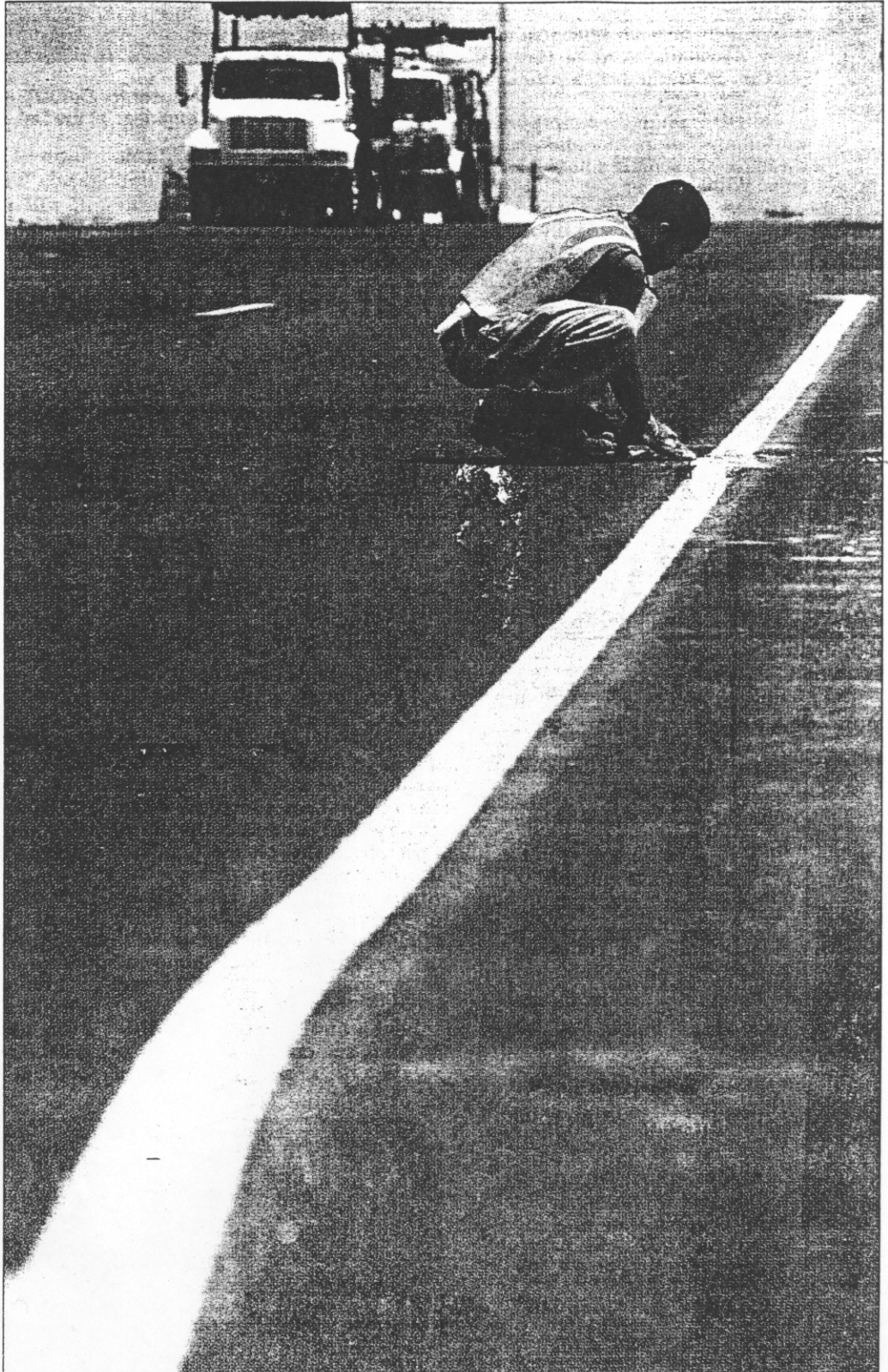
Motorists will get a free ride along the 11-mile stretch of road until Nov. 15, when the final ramps are completed and the state begins charging \$1 at the Biddles Corner toll plaza. Motorists on Del. 1 already pay \$1 to pass through a toll plaza east of Dover.

It's been almost six years since Delaware opened such a massive stretch of highway. The first of three sections of Del. 1 — the Dover bypass — opened on an icy December day in 1993.

The last section, which will run from southern Odessa to Smyrna, opens in 2003.

Upon completion, the

See **BYPASS** —



The News Journal/JENNIFER CORBETT
Haneeff Clowers, a road stripper, touches up a newly painted line on the Del. 1 bypass in Odessa. Southbound lanes are to open in mid-September, with northbound lanes opening in October.